



LOCKINGCASTLECHURCH

Life Group Notes – 26th September 2021

Coming back to the heart: Don't give up! Haggai 2:1-9

Please visit the LCC website to listen to the talk or read the transcript if available.

Haggai 2 – The Glory of the new Temple

2¹ on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: 2² 'Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, 3³ "Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? 4⁴ But now be strong, Zerubbabel," declares the LORD. "Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land," declares the LORD, "and work. For I am with you," declares the LORD Almighty. 5⁵ "This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear."

6⁶ 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7⁷ I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD Almighty. 8⁸ "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty. 9⁹ "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty. "And in this place I will grant peace," declares the LORD Almighty.'

Note this is the NIV2011 version of the text. It would be helpful to compare it with other translations.

Comment:

The Governor Zerubbabel, Joshua the High Priest and the people of the Land were getting on with the work building the temple as commanded. However, it wasn't easy, because those who had memories of the former temple were struggling as they were comparing the former with the current and finding it wanting. Comparison can steal away zeal and rob us of our motivation, robbing us of joy and happiness. When we think of the 'good old days', maybe before the pandemic, or before the church in the UK was struggling so much, we can get demoralized. But, God is aware of this, and sends His prophet to give his people a pep talk: Be strong, be brave, be courageous. 3 times God says to 'be strong', so we have to listen up - He means business! God is calling us to be resilient and to persevere in the face of hardship and not lose heart. He is with us, and His spirit is here to empower us to do the work and rebuild better.

Questions:

- 1) How are you feeling as we step closer towards 'a new normal'?
- 2) In what ways do we compare: a) Ourselves with others? b) Our church with others? How can we get out of the rut of comparing?
- 3) Read Hebrews 12:1-2 from the Message version: *'Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honour, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!'*

Reflecting on this passage, how does it motivate us to not give up, but keep on going?

- 4) What is the Lord challenging you to build (work at)?